

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 1, wherein comprising:

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions; and

a side panel door movably arranged between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an open position exposing the access opening of the compartment, the side panel door having an exterior surface panel configured and arranged to form an exterior of a vehicle body side panel,

the side panel door is being pivotally coupled to the mounting structure by a hinge assembly that is mounted between has a first part on the mounting structure and a second part on the side panel door.

3. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 2, wherein

the hinge assembly has a lower horizontally arranged pivot axis configured and arranged to pivot the side panel door downwardly relative to the compartment when moved from the closed position to the opened position.

4. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 3, further comprising

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 4, wherein comprising:

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions;

a side panel door movably arranged between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an open position exposing the access opening of the compartment, the side panel door having an exterior surface panel configured and arranged to form an exterior of a vehicle body side panel; and

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door, the stay member is a cable stay that is being completely covered by the side panel door when the side panel door is in the closed position.

6. (Currently Amended) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 2, wherein

the compartment is primarily constructed of a non-metallic material and the mounting structure is primarily constructed of a rigid metallic material.

7. (Currently Amended) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 2, wherein

the exterior surface panel of the side panel door has a front edge, an upper edge, a rear edge and a lower edge with the upper and lower edges extending substantially horizontally and the front and rear edges extending between the upper and lower edges.

8. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 7, further comprising

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door.

9. (Currently Amended) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to ~~claim 8, wherein claim 10, further comprising~~

~~the front edge has a concaved arc shape that defines a portion of a side body wheel opening~~

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door.

10. (Currently Amended) A The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 7, wherein comprising:

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions; and

a side panel door movably arranged between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an open position exposing the access opening of the compartment, the side panel door having an exterior surface panel configured and arranged to form an exterior of a vehicle body side panel, the exterior surface panel of the side panel door having a front edge, an upper edge, a rear edge and a lower edge with the upper and lower

edges extending substantially horizontally and the front and rear edges extending between the upper and lower edges, the front edge has having a concaved arc shape that defines a portion of a side body wheel opening.

11. (Currently Amended) A The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 1, wherein comprising:

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions; and

a side panel door movably arranged between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an open position exposing the access opening of the compartment, the side panel door having an exterior surface panel configured and arranged to form an exterior of a vehicle body side panel,

the side panel door includes including a latching member and the mounting structure includes compartment including a latch member that is arranged to cooperate with the latching member of the side panel door to retain the side panel door in the closed position.

12. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 11, wherein

the latching member includes a lock cylinder and a lock cylinder cover.

13. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 12, wherein

the lock cylinder cover is arranged to pivot relative to the side panel door between a covering position overlying the lock cylinder and an uncovered position exposing the lock cylinder.

14. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 13, wherein

the lock cylinder cover is biased to the covering position by a biasing element.

15. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 14, wherein

the lock cylinder cover includes a sealing member that is configured and arranged to protect the lock cylinder from contaminates.

16. (Currently Amended) A vehicle side panel storage box assembly comprising:
a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions
extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting
portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the
compartment being a separate component from the mounting structure that is fixedly coupled
to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions; and

a side panel door pivotally mounted to directly on the mounting structure between a
closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an opened position
exposing the access opening of the compartment.

17. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 16, wherein

the side panel door is pivotally coupled to the mounting structure by a hinge assembly
that is mounted between the mounting structure and the side panel door.

18. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 17, wherein

the hinge assembly has a lower horizontally arranged pivot axis configured and
arranged to pivot the side panel door downwardly relative to the compartment when moved
from the closed position to the opened position.

19. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 18, further comprising

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door.

20. (Currently Amended) A The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 19, wherein comprising:

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions;

a side panel door pivotally mounted to the mounting structure between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an opened position exposing the access opening of the compartment; and

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door, the stay member is a cable stay that is being completely covered by the side panel door when the side panel door is in the closed position.

21. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 16, wherein

the compartment is primarily constructed of a non-metallic material and the mounting structure is primarily constructed of a rigid metallic material.

22. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 16, wherein

the side panel door has an exterior surface panel with a front edge, an upper edge, a rear edge and a lower edge with the upper and lower edges extending substantially horizontally and the front and rear edges extending between the upper and lower edges.

23. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 22, further comprising

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door.

24. (Currently Amended) A The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 23, wherein comprising:

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions; and

a side panel door pivotally mounted to the mounting structure between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an opened position exposing the access opening of the compartment,

the side panel door has an exterior surface panel including a first side the front edge has having a concaved arc shape that defines a portion of a side body wheel opening.

25. (Currently Amended) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 22, wherein

the front edge has a concaved arc shape that defines a portion of a side body wheel opening.

26. (Currently Amended) A The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 16, wherein comprising:

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions; and

a side panel door pivotally mounted to the mounting structure between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an opened position exposing the access opening of the compartment,

the side panel door including includes a latching member and the compartment including mounting structure includes a latch member that is arranged to cooperate with the latching member of the side panel door to retain the side panel door in the closed position.

27. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 26, wherein

the latching member includes a lock cylinder and a lock cylinder cover.

28. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 27, wherein

the lock cylinder cover is arranged to pivot relative to the side panel door between a covering position overlying the lock cylinder and an uncovered position exposing the lock cylinder.

29. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 28, wherein

the lock cylinder cover is biased to the covering position by a biasing element.

30. (Original) The vehicle side panel storage box assembly according to claim 29, wherein

the lock cylinder cover includes a sealing member that is configured and arranged to protect the lock cylinder from contaminates.

31. (Currently Amended) A vehicle structure comprising:
- a vehicle body having ~~a floor panel~~, a side panel, ~~a pair of lateral cross members fixedly coupled to a bottom surface of the floor panel defining a first portion of a side body wheel opening~~; and
- a vehicle side panel storage box assembly coupled to the vehicle body, the vehicle side panel storage box assembly including
- a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions, the mounting portions being coupled to the ~~lateral cross members~~ vehicle body;
- a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions; and
- a side panel door movably arranged between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an opened position exposing the access opening of the compartment, the side panel door having an exterior surface panel that follows an exterior contour of the side panel, the side panel door including a first side edge that defines a second portion of a side body wheel opening.
32. (Currently Amended) The vehicle structure according to claim 31, wherein the side panel door is pivotally coupled to the mounting structure by a hinge assembly that is mounted between directly on the mounting structure and the side panel door.
33. (Original) The vehicle structure according to claim 32, wherein the hinge assembly has a lower horizontally arranged pivot axis configured and arranged to pivot the side panel door downwardly relative to the compartment when moved from the closed position to the opened position.
34. (Original) The vehicle structure according to claim 33, further comprising

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door.

35. (Currently Amended) A ~~The vehicle structure according to claim 34, wherein comprising:~~

a vehicle body having a side panel; and

a vehicle side panel storage box assembly coupled to the vehicle body, the vehicle side panel storage box assembly including

a mounting structure fixedly coupled to the vehicle body,

a mounting structure having a bottom support portion, a pair of side portions

extending upwardly from opposite ends of the bottom support portion and a pair of mounting portions extending outwardly from the side portions, the mounting portions being coupled to the vehicle body;

a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure between the bottom support portion and the side portions;

a side panel door movably arranged between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an opened position exposing the access opening of the compartment, the side panel door having an exterior surface panel that follows an exterior contour of the side panel; and

a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door, the stay member ~~being~~ is a cable stay that is completely covered by the side panel door when the side panel door is in the closed position.

36. (Original) The vehicle structure according to claim 31, wherein the compartment is primarily constructed of a non-metallic material and the mounting structure is primarily constructed of a rigid metallic material.

37. (Currently Amended) The vehicle structure according to claim 31, wherein the exterior surface panel of the side panel door further includes ~~has a front edge, an upper edge, a rear edge and a lower edge and a second side edge~~ with the upper and lower edges extending substantially horizontally and the ~~front and rear~~ first and second side edges extending between the upper and lower edges.

38. (Original) The vehicle structure according to claim 37, further comprising a stay member having a first end coupled to the mounting structure and a second end coupled to the side panel door, the stay member being located outside of the compartment and configured to limit downward movement of the side panel door.

39. (Currently Amended) The vehicle structure according to ~~claim 38~~ claim 31, wherein

~~the side panel of the vehicle body forms a first portion of a side body wheel opening,~~
and

~~the first side front edge has a concaved arc shape that defines the second a-second~~
portion of the side body wheel opening.

40. (Currently Amended) The vehicle structure according to claim 37, wherein
~~the side panel of the vehicle body forms a first portion of a side body wheel opening,~~
and the ~~front~~ first edge has a concaved arc shape that defines ~~the second a-second~~
portion of the side body wheel opening.

41. (Currently Amended) The vehicle structure according to claim 31, wherein
the side panel door includes a latching member and the compartment mounting
structure includes a latch member that is arranged to cooperate with the latching member of
the side panel door to retain the side panel door in the closed position.

42. (Original) The vehicle structure according to claim 41, wherein
the latching member includes a lock cylinder and a lock cylinder cover.

43. (Original) The vehicle structure according to claim 42, wherein the lock cylinder cover is arranged to pivot relative to the side panel door between a covering position overlying the lock cylinder and an uncovered position exposing the lock cylinder.

44. (Original) The vehicle structure according to claim 43, wherein the lock cylinder cover is biased to the covering position by a biasing element.

45. (Currently Amended) The vehicle structure according to ~~claim 14~~ claim 41, wherein

the lock cylinder cover includes a sealing member that is configured and arranged to protect the lock cylinder from contaminates.

46. (Currently Amended) A vehicle structure comprising:
a vehicle body having a floor panel, a side panel, ~~first and second lateral cross members fixedly coupled to a bottom surface of the floor panel~~; and
a vehicle side panel storage box assembly coupled to the vehicle body, the vehicle side panel storage box assembly including
a mounting structure fixedly coupled to the ~~first and second lateral cross members~~ vehicle body,
a compartment having a wall structure defining a box with an access opening, the compartment being fixedly coupled to the mounting structure, and
a side panel door pivotally mounted directly on ~~to~~ the mounting structure such that ~~the side panel door is primarily supported by the mounting structure to move~~ between a closed position overlying the access opening of the compartment to an opened position exposing the access opening of the compartment.

47. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 46, wherein the side panel door is configured and arranged relative to the mounting structure to pivot downwardly about a lower horizontally arranged pivot axis relative to the compartment when moved from the closed position to the opened position.

48. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 46, further comprising a stay member coupled between the mounting structure and the side panel door to limit downward movement of the side panel door, with the stay member being located outside of the compartment and being completely covered by the side panel door when the side panel door is in the closed position.

49. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 46, further comprising the side panel door includes a latching member and the compartment includes a latch member that is arranged to cooperate with the latching member of the side panel door to retain the side panel door in the closed position.

50. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 49, wherein the latching member includes a lock cylinder and a lock cylinder cover.

51. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 49, wherein the lock cylinder cover is arranged to pivot relative to the side panel door between a covering position overlying the lock cylinder and an uncovered position exposing the lock cylinder.

52. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 51, wherein the lock cylinder cover is biased to the covering position by a biasing element.

53. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 52, wherein the lock cylinder cover includes a sealing member that is configured and arranged to protect the lock cylinder from contaminates.

54. (New) The vehicle structure according to claim 46, wherein the vehicle body further includes a floor panel supported by a lateral cross member with the mounting structure being fixedly coupled directly to the lateral cross member.